

Lesson Plan

Teacher: Carly Fleet

Subject: English

Time: 60 Minutes

Grade: 11-2

Date: Tues, Feb 1, 2011

Lesson: Units of Rhythm in Lyrical Poetry

Materials:

Provide students with copies of the poem "Winter Days", double-spaced so that students can denote syllables above the words.

Learning Outcome:

Students will experiment with combining forms of prose and poetry.

Students will explore several different units of rhythm. They will then work in groups to examine a poem provided by the teacher. They will denote the syllables of each line in order to determine the units of rhythm used in the poem. Students will then work in groups or individually to write their own poem, song or rap and explore the units of rhythm they used in it.

Engagement Activity:

The teacher will explain to the students that one of the most common types of poetry is lyrical poetry, and it is encountered regularly in our daily lives. Ask students for examples of this, and anticipate that they will provide answers such as songs, television commercials, advertising, etc. Lyrical poetry often uses a deliberate rhythm and rhyming pattern, or meter, that uses stressed and unstressed syllables. The teacher will then ask the students to take one minute to think about their favourite song and write one or two (appropriate for the classroom!) lines from it on a sheet of paper, which they will then place on the edge of their desks.

Primary Activities:

1. Using the Smartboard, display the *Wheeler English - Lines & Rhymes: Rhythm* website found at <http://www.angelfire.com/ct2/evenski/poetry/rhythm.html>. Discuss rhythm, and have students copy brief notes in their notebooks. Most important is that students understand that rhythm in writing is similar to a beat in music, and that even our daily conversations have a particular rhythm.

Introduce students to the following common units of rhythm:

Disyllables

The **iamb**, which has two syllables (as in "hello")

The **trochee**, two syllables, only the first accented (as in "winter")

The **spondee**, two consecutive syllables that are both stressed (as in "no way")

Trisyllables

The **anapest**, three syllables, with only the third stressed (as in "Halloween")

The **dactyl**, one stressed syllable followed by two unstressed (as in "excellent")

2. Give students one minute to look at the song lyrics they have written, and have them try to identify the various units of rhythm that those lyrics consist of. Ask for volunteers to share their chosen lyrics with the class and write them on the Smartboard. Facilitate a brief, open-class discussion about the units found in them. If possible, choose from a variety of different musical genres, such as country, rock, pop and rap.

3. Explain that the $\bar{}$ (macron) denotes stressed syllables and the $\acute{}$ (breve) denotes unstressed syllables. Have students model this for the rest of the class by asking volunteers to come to the Smartboard and write the corresponding indicators above the song lyrics.

4. Have students form groups of three, and give them the short poem “Winter Days” by Gareth Owen. They will then read the poem, denote the syllables in each word using the macron and breve, and discuss and write down the units of rhythm in each line.

5. Explain to students that they will write their own short poem about winter and then identify the primary units of rhythm in it, as they have just done with “Winter Days”. Tell them that their own feelings about winter should be evident in their poem, just as Owen’s perspective is apparent in his. The teacher will ask students to make an inference about the author’s opinion of winter. Anticipate that students will answer he does not like winter. Model this activity by reading the following poem that gives a differing perspective from Owen’s, which the teacher has written as an example:

Awake at dawn
I couldn’t sleep!
Raise the blinds
It’s dark and bleak!

Mounting excitement
As snow falls fast!
Winter has arrived
At last!

Post this on the Smartboard, and choose two students (preferably two who have not yet been called on during this class) to identify and mark the units of rhythm in it. They may choose to work alone or in pairs, and they have the choice of writing either a poem, or a song or rap. Give each student a copy of the rubric by which their work will be assessed.

Closure:

On an exit slip, have students write down one awareness they have gained from this class; one example of where they might encounter rhythmic units in their daily lives; and one question they have that remains unanswered, or something that confuses them.

Assessment:

The teacher will read the exit cards in order to identify possible areas of confusion or difficulty. Students’ poems will be collected and assessed using the following rubric.

Assessment Rubric
Units of Rhythm in Lyrical Poetry

(*Note that although the rubric refers to “the poem”, students have the option to write lyrical verses of a song or rap instead.)

Marking Scheme

- 1 – The poem is weak in this area and needs improvement.
- 2 – The poem is adequate in this area but could be improved.
- 3 – The poem displays comprehension and proficiency in this area.
- 4 – The poem indicates mastery and demonstrated application of knowledge.

Content	The poem follows the assignment guidelines and is an appropriate length of two or three verses.	
Creativity	The poem is original, creative, and sparks the reader’s interest.	
Convention	The poem does not contain spelling or grammatical errors, and the syllables are clearly denoted.	
Coherence	Ideas in the poem are expressed in a clear and organized manner, and the writer’s perspective is apparent.	
Competence	The writer displays a clear understanding of units of rhythm and demonstrates that he/she can apply this information.	

Differentiation:

This lesson will cater to various learning styles and intelligences by giving students choice in the activities they pursue. Students who tend to be more concrete in their thinking will likely perform well with the structure of the units or rhythm, while more abstract thinkers will likely enjoy the writing exercise. Students will strengthen skills in group work and collaboration in the “Winter Days” activity, while the subsequent activity will allow them to work individually if they like.

Enrichment:

As enrichment, for those students who finish before the end of the class, they will be given the option to either assist those students who need help or to write a verse of a poem about a different season, using units of rhythm of their choice.

Winter Days

By Gareth Owen

Biting air
Winds blow
City streets
Under snow
Noses red
Lips sore
Runny eyes
Hands raw
Chimneys smoke
Cars crawl
Piled snow
On garden wall
Slush in gutters
Ice in lanes
Frosty patterns
On window panes
Morning call
Lift up your head
Nipped by Winter
Stay in bed